

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of the claims replaces all earlier listings and all earlier versions.

1. (Currently Amended) A method to form multicolor images in substantial registration on sugar-shell confectionery pieces, said method comprising the steps of:

printing a first image in a first color on a non-planar surface of a sugar-shell confectionary piece situated in a transporting recess in a transport surface by contacting said surface of said piece with an inked offset roll to form a printed piece at a first printing station;

transporting the printed piece in the transporting recess to a second printing station and maintaining a registering relationship of said printed piece from said first printing station to said second printing station by applying a pressure differential to a portion of said printed piece effective to maintain said printed piece in a set position in the transporting recess; and

printing a second image in a second color in registration with said first image on said printed piece by contacting said printed piece with a second inked offset roll while maintaining said registering relationship.

2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said transporting recess includes a resilient portion, and said applying of a pressure differential urges said printed piece against said resilient portion.

3. (Cancelled).

4. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said non-planar surface of said sugar shell confectionery piece is maintained above a transport surface at said first and said second printing stations.

5.-8. (Cancelled).

9. (Currently Amended) A method to form multicolor images in substantial registration on a non-planar printing surface of a sugar-shell confectionery piece, said method comprising the steps of:

retaining a confectionery piece having a non-planar printing surface thereon against a recess formed on a transporting surface by applying a pressure differential to a portion of said confectionery piece effective to urge said piece against said recess and to prevent yawing and skewing of the piece;

printing a first image in a first color on said non-planar printing surface of said edible piece by contacting said surface of said piece with an inked offset roll to form a printed piece at a first printing station; and

printing a second image in a second color in registration with said first image on said printed piece by contacting said printed piece with a second inked offset roll while maintaining a registering relationship of said first image to said second image, so that the first image is within 1/64 inch of its designed placement with respect to the second image.

10. (Original) The method according to claim 9, wherein said recess includes a resilient portion, and said applying of a pressure differential urges said edible piece against said resilient portion.

11. (Cancelled).

12. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 9, wherein said non-planar printing surface of said confectionery piece is maintained above said transporting surface at said first and said second printing stations.

13.-58. (Cancelled).

59. (Currently Amended) A method to form multicolor images in substantial registration on non-planar surfaces of sugar shell confectionery pieces, said method comprising the steps of:

dispersing a plurality of sugar shell confectionery pieces into a plurality of individual recesses on a transport surface, said recesses having a curved shape in correspondence with the pieces,

transporting the pieces in the recesses to a first printing station,

printing a first image in a first color on a non-planar printing surface of the pieces by contacting said surface of said piece with an inked offset roll to form printed pieces at the first printing station;

transporting the printed pieces to a second printing station while maintaining the printed pieces in a registering relationship from said first printing station to said second printing station by applying a pressure differential to a portion of said printed pieces effective to maintain said printed pieces in a set position in the recesses; and

printing a second image in a second color in registration with said first image on said non planar printing surface of the printed pieces at the second print station by contacting said printed piece with a second inked offset roll while maintaining said registering relationship.

61. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 59, wherein said edible pieces and said recesses are lentil shaped.

62. (Cancelled).

63. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 61, wherein said lentil shaped edible pieces are about 14.4 mm or smaller in their smallest dimension, wherein said recesses have a corresponding size adapted to accept the edible piece, and the registration of the second image is better than 1/64 inch with respect to the first image.

64. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 59, wherein said steps of printing a first image and printing a second image each comprise contacting a non planar sugar shell printing surface of an edible piece with an ink-laden printing surface and wherein the first image dries before printing the second image.

65. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 59, wherein said recess has a depth smaller than the thickness of the edible piece such that the non-planar surface of the edible piece protrudes above the surface of the transport surface proximate the recess.

66. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 59, wherein said edible piece is held in registration between said first printing station and said second printing station by vacuum applied to the recess.